

TEXTILE MANUFACTURER COUNTERS FOREIGN COMPETITION

ABOUT ABSECON MILLS INC. Absecon Mills has been a supplier of fabric for the public seating industry for 35 years. A number of years ago the company started a technical textiles division to supply fabric to the Ballistic and Composite industries. The family-owned company has 70 employees, with 58 of them located in the Cologne, New Jersey facility, and the additional employees out in the field.

THE CHALLENGE. Absecon's business was negatively impacted by the opening of trade barriers and dropping of tariffs and duties with China. The company's strategy to combat foreign competition was to expand into the US military markets, as products supplied to those industries must be produced within the United States in compliance with the Berry amendment. Quality, repeatability and traceability are critical when doing business in these markets. Virtually all of the customers Absecon would be supplying are ISO certified and require ISO certification of their primary and subcontractors. To compete in this market, Absecon Mills would need to achieve ISO 9001 certification. In addition, Absecon's core contract upholstery business was expanding into the Class 8 Truck Seating Market, and ISO certification was required to be a Tier II Supplier to that market. The certification would also open doors for the company to manufacture body armor for law enforcement, apply for ballistic defense contracts for the SPS (Soldier Protection System), and sell to the two largest composite products distributors in the US.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Absecon Mills had along history of working with the New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program (NJMEP), and turned to the NIST MEP affiliate once again for assistance with the certification project. Obtaining certification is costly and more challenging for relatively small companies. NJMEP and its resource, Prism International—a company with extensive experience in ISO certification—worked closely with Absecon to create a plan for implementing ISO 9100 and achieving registration. Assisted by NJMEP, Absecon applied for a New Jersey Department of Labor Skills4Jersey Training Grant to help defer the cost. The company received the grant, and 58 employees participated in a 12-month training in the skills and processes necessary to achieve ISO certification. As a result on its work with NJMEP and its resource, Absecon Mills is now an ISO 9100 registered company and able to do business with companies formerly out of their wheelhouse. The company increased sales, invested in new products and processes, and created and retained jobs.

"We were very satisfied with both NJMEP and the instructor provided. Both provided us with great service and accommodated our training needs and schedule. I would recommend both!"

-David Adair, Executive Vice President

RESULTS



Increased sales by **\$2.2 Million**



Cost savings of **\$200,000**



Invested **\$31,090** in workforce training



Invested **\$588,000** in new products and processes



Hired **14** new employees, retained 15

CONTACT US



2 Ridgedale Avenue
Suite 305
Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927



(973)998-9801



www.njmep.org

